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FRESH PORK for your table



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Shown on the cover are fresh stuffed pork chops. The cover photo and all photos inside this bulletin are used through the courtesy of the National Livestock and Meat Board.

The cooking timetables in this bulletin are adapted from tables prepared by the National Livestock and Meat Board.

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Fresh Pork for your table

Pork offers you meal variety and top nutrition. Richly browned, flavorful pork roasts and chops, spicy sausage, and convenient cured meats are tasty entrees any time of the year. Today's pork is meaty, lean, and tender because today's farmers produce lean, meaty, tender hogs to meet consumer demands.

Food Value

Pork supplies high quality protein. A 3½-ounce serving of lean cooked pork supplies about 40 percent of the daily protein needs of an average man and about 50 percent of the daily needs of an average woman. It also is a good source of iron. Pork is unique as a source of thiamine, a B vitamin. A 3½-ounce serving of lean pork fulfills the daily thiamine needs of everyone except teenage boys, who get about 80 percent of their daily thiamine needs from it.

The amount of fat in a piece of pork influences its caloric content. Lean pork compares favorably with the lean of other meats in caloric value. Today's 3½-ounce serving of cooked pork (a good size chop, for example) has about 240 calories, compared with 377 some years ago. This change has resulted from the development of lean pork from meaty hogs. Meat packers and retailers also have added to the amount of edible pork you get per pound by trimming fat closely.

Shopping for Fresh Pork

Signs Of Quality

High quality pork is grayish pink to delicate rose in color. The flesh is firm, fine grained, and free from wateriness. Look for firm, white fat and a large proportion of lean to fat and bone.

Look for evidence of inspection. Federally inspected meats must have a "U.S. Inspected and Passed" stamp. Federal inspection assures

you that the meat product is wholesome, that it came from a healthy animal, that the carcass and all its parts were examined individually, and that the meat was handled in a sanitary manner in the plant. Also, you are assured that the product has been correctly labeled.

A "Minnesota Approved" label on processed products means that the meat used in the product was federally inspected. It means that the product was handled in an accredited establishment under specifications set by the Minnesota Standards Law. These standards are substantially in conformance with federal standards regulating sanitation, equipment, labeling definitions, and meat product identity.

How Much To Buy

The number of servings you can get from a pound of pork depends upon individual appetites, amount of fat and bones, and the quantity of meat remaining after cooking. The table below is a rough guide to the quantity of fresh pork you should purchase.

| <u>Pork cut</u> | <u>Number of average size servings per pound</u> |
|---|--|
| Fresh roast, bone in (loin, picnic, Boston shoulder, fresh ham) | 2 to 3 |
| Fresh roast without bone | 3 to 4 |
| Spareribs | 1 to 2 |

Storing Fresh Pork

Refrigerator Storage

Fresh pork roasts and chops will keep from 2 to 4 days in the coldest part of your refrigerator if they are held at 38° to 40° F. Because ground pork is handled more than other pork, it can become contaminated easily. So you should use it within 1 or 2 days.

Leave prepackaged fresh meats in their original wrappers if you plan to use them within 1 or 2 days. Otherwise, open the ends of the package to allow for slight surface drying. The drying will retard development of off-flavors. When you buy meat that is not prepackaged, remove the market wrapping paper and store it unwrapped or loosely covered with wax paper. Check your refrigerator manual for information on meat storage.

Freezer Storage

To freeze fresh pork, wrap it tightly in moisture and vapor proof material such as heavy duty aluminum foil, saran-type film, or cello-

phane laminate. Force out the air as you wrap the meat, and fasten the ends by rolling them or securing them with tape. Avoid puncturing the wrapping by padding the bone ends with pieces of folded wrapping material. You can put pieces of folded wrapping paper between chops or steaks to make them easier to separate and thaw. Date each package; leave space between packages for fast freezing.

Store fresh pork at 0° F. or lower and use it within 4 months. Because it has both high fat and salt content, fresh sausage should not be kept longer than 1 month. Pork fat becomes rancid when exposed to air, and rancidity is accelerated by the presence of salt. For these reasons, pork products require high quality wrapping materials and have a limited storage period.

Defrost meat in its original wrap, preferably in the refrigerator. Allow 3 to 5 hours per pound for thawing a small roast in the refrigerator. You can thaw pork at room temperature; allow 1 to 2 hours per pound for a small roast. Cook or refrigerate thawed pork immediately after defrosting it.

Storing Cooked Pork

Cool cooked pork rapidly, cover it closely, and refrigerate it. Leave it in as large pieces as possible to prevent drying out. Use refrigerated cooked meat (stored at 38° to 40° F.) within 1 or 2 days.

You can freeze cooked pork by slicing it and packaging it in moisture and vapor proof material. Pouring broth or gravy over the slices will help retain meat flavor. Use frozen cooked meat (held at 0° F.) within 2 or 3 months.

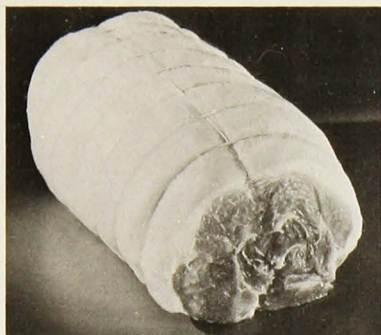
Cooking Fresh Pork

Pork must be well cooked both for hygienic reasons and to develop its flavor. Thoroughly cooked pork is creamy white and has no traces of pink. Fresh pork sausage is done when it is gray and no traces of pink remain. To test thin pieces of pork, such as pork chops, for doneness, cut along an edge where the bone joins the flesh. There should be no trace of pink.

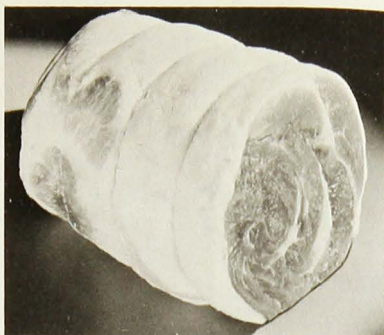
For roasts, make a slight cut to the center and check for pink color. Allow about 35 minutes per pound at 325° F. for roasts. For greater accuracy, use a meat thermometer and the timetable on page 7 as guides for roasting pork. You needn't thaw frozen pork before cooking it, but allow from one-third to one-half more cooking time for roasts. Insert the meat thermometer after the roast has thawed in the oven.

Roasting Pork

For roasting, choose from among the following fresh pork cuts:



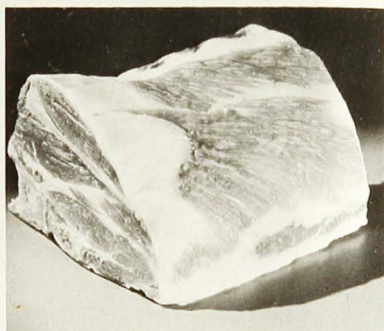
Boneless leg



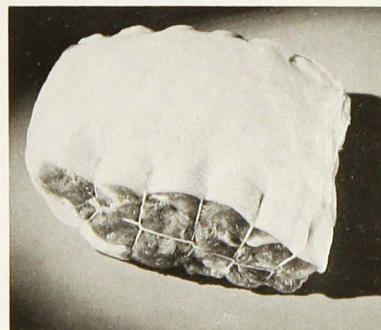
Rolled shoulder (picnic)



Center cut roast



Blade loin roast



Cushion shoulder (picnic)



Picnic shoulder



Loin roast (center cut)



Sirloin roast

Procedure for roasting all fresh pork roasts:

1. Set oven temperature at 325° to 350° F. Use the lower temperature for large roasts.
2. Place meat fat side up on a rack in a shallow pan. The rack will keep the meat above the drippings.
3. Season meat with salt and pepper before, during, or after cooking, if desired. Seasoning affects only the meat surface, as it penetrates only about ¼ to ½ inch.
4. Insert a meat thermometer so the bulb is in the center of a rolled roast or in the center of the largest muscle in an unboned roast.
5. Do not add water or cover.
6. Use the following guide for roasting fresh pork.

Guide for roasting fresh pork*

| Cut | Approximate weight (pounds) | Oven temperature | Interior temperature | Approximate cooking time (minutes per pound) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|--|
| Loin | | | | |
| Center | 3-5 | 325°-350° F. | 170° F. | 30-35 |
| Half | 5-7 | 325°-350° F. | 170° F. | 35-40 |
| Blade or sirloin end ... | 3-4 | 325°-350° F. | 170° F. | 40-45 |
| Boned loin roll | 3-5 | 325°-350° F. | 170° F. | 40-45 |
| Picnic shoulder | | | | |
| Rolled | 3-5 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 40-45 |
| Cushion style | 3-5 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 35-40 |
| Boston shoulder | 4-6 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 45-50 |
| Leg (fresh ham) | | | | |
| Whole (bone in) | 10-14 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 25-30 |
| Whole (boneless) | 7-10 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 35-40 |
| Half (bone in) | 5-7 | 325°-350° F. | 185° F. | 40-45 |

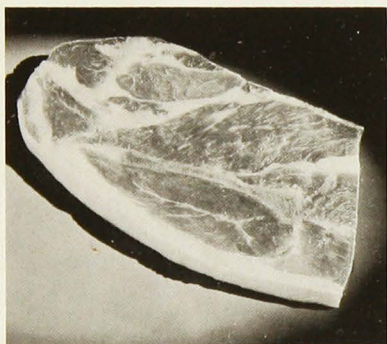
* Source: National Livestock and Meat Board.

A roast will be easier to carve if you allow it to sit 10 or 15 minutes after you take it from the oven. Remove the strings from rolled roasts and the backbone from loin roasts before you carve them.

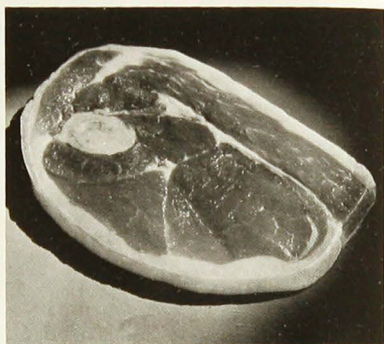
Note: Research has proven that pork loin roasts are tender, juicy, and safe to eat when cooked to an internal temperature of 170° F. Cooking them to a lower internal temperature than other pork roasts is possible because of the structure of the roast itself and the lack of excessive fat in today's pork. Note that this recommendation applies **only** to loin roasts.

Braising Pork

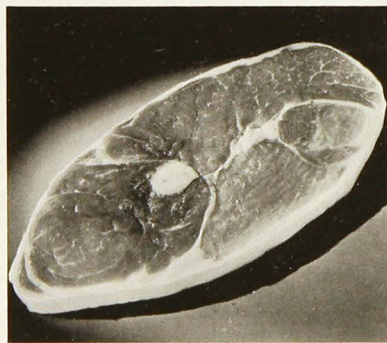
By braising thin cuts of pork, you can cook them till well done and still not dry them out. For braising, choose from among the following pork cuts:



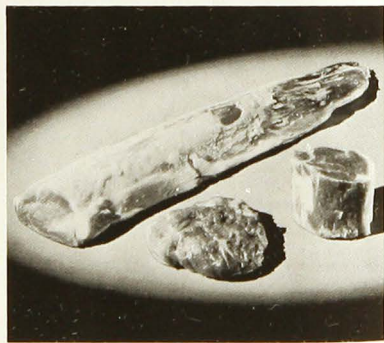
Blade steak



Arm steak



Leg steak



Tenderloin



Above, left: loin chops

Above, right: rib chops

Right: butterfly chops



Procedure for braising fresh pork:

1. Choose a heavy utensil. Brown meat slowly in a little fat. You can get fat for browning pork chops by standing them on their fatty edges and cooking them till you have enough fat to grease the pan.
2. Season meat with salt, pepper, herbs, or spices.
3. Add a small amount of liquid such as water, vegetable juice, or soup. Pork tenderloin or pork tenderloin chops may not need additional liquid. Determine the amount of liquid to add by considering the quantity of meat in the pan and the fit of the lid.
4. Cover the pan tightly to retain steam.
5. Cook meat at a low temperature until it is tender or no pink shows when you cut it near the bone. Add a little liquid if necessary.
6. Use this table as a guide for braising fresh pork.

Guide for braising fresh pork*

| Cut | Average weight or thickness | Approximate cooking time |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pork chops | ¾-1 ½ inches | 45-60 minutes |
| Spareribs | 2-3 pounds | 1 ½ hours |
| Pork tenderloin | | |
| Whole | ¾-1 pound | 45-60 minutes |
| Fillet | ½ inch | 30 minutes |
| Shoulder steaks | | |
| Arm and blade | ¾ inch | 45-60 minutes |
| Leg of fresh ham | | |
| Slice | ¾ inch | 45-60 minutes |

* Source: National Livestock and Meat Board.

Simmering Pork In Liquid

Bony pork pieces simmered in liquid provide a base for many interesting dishes. The fresh pork cuts pictured below are suitable for simmering:



Pork hocks



Pork spareribs

Procedure for simmering fresh pork in liquid:

1. Brown the meat in a little fat, if desired. Simmered pork usually is not browned.
2. Season meat with salt, herbs, spices, or vegetables.
3. Cover meat with hot or cold liquid.
4. Cover kettle and simmer until tender. Boiling will shrink and toughen meat.
5. Add vegetables such as sauerkraut near the end of the cooking time.
6. Cook until meat and vegetables are tender.
7. Use the following guide for simmering pork in liquid.

| <u>Cut</u> | <u>Approximate cooking time</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Spareribs | 1½ hours |
| Pork hocks | 2½ hours |
| Fresh pigs feet | 2½ hours |
| Heart and tongue | 2½ hours |
| Back and neck bones | 1½ hours |

Cooking Fresh Pork Sausage

Follow cooking directions on the package. If there are no directions, follow this procedure: Mold bulk sausage lightly into cakes about ½ inch thick. Place the sausage links or patties in a cold frying pan and add 2 to 4 tablespoons of water. Cover the pan tightly and cook the sausages for 5 to 8 minutes. Remove the cover and brown them. Sausage is done when the interior color is uniformly gray.